

WE CLAIM:

1. A visual image marketing method comprising the steps of:

recording object location, time information and marketing information;

receiving a product input from a viewer;

retrieving said marketing information based at least in part on said object location;

5 and

displaying said marketing information.

2. A system for providing marketing information comprising:

a first transmitter configured to transmit to one or more viewers a sequence of images, wherein at least one item having associated marketing information is included in a portion of the sequence of images;

5 a receiver configured to receive data from one of the viewers, wherein the data at least partially identifies the item;

a database configured to store and provide the associated marketing information about the identified item; and

10 a second transmitter configured to transmit to the at least one viewer the associated marketing information.

3. The system according to claim 2, wherein:

the first transmitter is further configured to transmit to the viewers information relating to the spatial location of the item within the portion of the sequence of images,

wherein the sequence of images and the spatial location information are transmitted

5 substantially simultaneously.

4. The system according to claim 2, wherein the received data is an item identifier useful for querying the database regarding the item.

5. The system according to claim 2, wherein the received data are pixel coordinates and the database is further configured to map between the pixel coordinates and an item identifier useful for querying the database.

6. The system according to claim 2, wherein said first and second transmitter are one and the same.

7. The system according to claim 2, wherein the first transmitter is configured to transmit to one of a television receiver, a digital television receiver, set-top box, a movie viewer, a personal digital assistant, and a personal computer.

8. The system according to claim 2, wherein the second transmitter is configured to transmit to one of a television receiver, a digital television receiver, set-top box, a movie viewer, a personal digital assistant, and a personal computer.

9. The system according to claim 2, wherein the receiver and the second transmitter are configured to operate during operation of the first transmitter.

10. The system according to claim 2, wherein the receiver and second transmitter are configured to operate after the first transmitter has substantially completed operation.

11. The system according to claim 2, wherein the database is further configured to store and provide the associated marketing information about the identified item according to at least one of: a name associated with the sequence of images, a grid location of the identified item within an image, a pixel location within an image, a transmission time associated with the sequence of images, a temporal location within the sequence of images, an item type, an item color, an item shape, a measurement of similarity with the item, and a participant within the sequence of images.

12. A method for providing marketing information, comprising the steps of:
storing marketing information about a product and associated location information, wherein said location information includes spatial and temporal data about the product in a digital video sequence;

transmitting the digital video sequence to a viewer;
receiving an inquiry about the product from the viewer;
retrieving the stored marketing information about the product based on the inquiry;
and
providing the retrieved marketing information to the viewer.

13. The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of:

transmitting the associated location information to the viewer substantially simultaneously with the digital video sequence.

14. The method according to claim 12, further comprising performing the step of transmitting the digital video sequence via one of television broadcast, HDTV broadcast, ATM transport, a computer network.

15. The method according to claim 12, further comprising performing the step of providing the retrieved marketing information via one of television broadcast, HDTV broadcast, ATM transport, a computer network.

16. The method according to claim 12 further comprising performing the steps of receiving an inquiry and providing retrieved information while the digital video sequence is being transmitted.

17. The method according to claim 12 further comprising performing the steps of receiving an inquiry and providing retrieved information after the digital video sequence has been transmitted.

18. The method according to claim 12, wherein the step of receiving an inquiry further comprises the steps of:

receiving location-related data about the product; and

mapping the location-related data to a product identifier useful for retrieving stored

5 marketing information corresponding to the product.

19. A method for processing a sequence of images, comprising the steps of:

capturing a sequence of images, wherein a product having associated marketing
information is included within at least a portion of the sequence;

segmenting one or more of the images to identify which pixels of a particular

5 image of the sequence coincide with the product;

grouping data about the product, the particular image, and the identified pixels;

and

associating with the grouped data the marketing information.

20. The method according to claim 19, wherein the step of segmenting is performed using
one or more of contour representation, edge detection, and chromaticity regions.

21. The method according to claim 19, further comprising the step of:

storing the grouped data and the associated data in a storage repository.

22. The method according to claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

in response to receiving the inquiry about the product from a viewer of the
sequence of images, retrieving the associated marketing information; and

forwarding the associated marketing information to the viewer.

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23. The method according to claim 21, further comprising the step of:

searching the storage repository based on the inquiry.

24. The method according to claim 19, wherein the grouped data includes at least one of:
a name associated with the sequence of images, a grid location of the product item within
an image, a pixel location within an image, a transmission time associated with the
sequence of images, a temporal location within the sequence of images, a product type, a
5 product color, a product shape, a measurement of similarity with the product with other
products, and a participant within the sequence of images.

25. The method according to claim 19, further comprising the step of:

encoding the grouped data within one of: a film medium, within a television
broadcast signal, and within a computer network transmission signal.

26. The method according to claim 19, wherein the step of capturing a sequence of
images further includes the step of:

determining a spatial location of the product within the one or more images.

27. The method according to claim 26, wherein the step of determining a spatial location
is performed using at least one of: a laser target signal on the product, one or more
transponders connected with the product, and an infrared sensing device